



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 24, 2021
TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee Social Sciences Subpanel
FROM: Tom Nies, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **Terms of Reference – SSC Social Science Subpanel Review of Groundfish and Scallops Specifications**

Background

In 2018, the New England Fishery Management Council convened an independent review to assess its past performance and, more importantly, to identify improvements to successfully address ongoing and future challenges. The reviewers found that the SSC may be underutilized, and the Council should consider broadening the scope of SSC activities to include the review of social and economic dimensions of FMP actions. As a result, this SSC subpanel is being tasked to review the social and economic issues identified and analyzed in Council documents for two past actions, Groundfish Framework Adjustment 59 and Scallop Framework Adjustment 32, which both included specifications for fishing years 2020 and 2021.

Terms of Reference

1. Affected Environment - Do the Affected Environment (AE) sections of the Environmental Assessments describing the fishery and fishing communities provide the relevant information for Council decision-makers to understand the potential social and economic impact issues specific to the alternatives under consideration (understanding that wherever possible, general background should be referenced in other sources and not repeated)?
 - a. What are the essential metrics, indicators or factors that should be included in the AE?
 - b. Are there additional groups that might be substantially affected that should be described in the AE?
 - c. Is the AE sufficiently focused and/or do these sections provide information that is not needed?
 - d. How could the descriptive sections in the AE be improved to support Council decision-makers considering the scope of the action, the available data, short timelines, and limited resources?
2. Analyses of Social and Economic Impacts - Do the analyses of these impacts provide the relevant information for Council decision-makers to understand the social and economic impacts of the management alternatives and comply with NMFS guidance for meeting NEPA requirements?
 - a. What are the essential metrics, indicators or factors that should be included in the analysis of social and economic impacts?

- b. Are there additional groups that might be substantially impacted that should be included in the impact analyses?
 - c. How could the impact analyses of the actions be improved to support Council decision-making, considering the scope of the action, the available data, short timelines, limited resources, as well as applicable Council on Environmental Quality NEPA guidance?
- 3. Are there alternative ways to identify key fishing communities considering NMFS guidance? Is there a consistent approach that could be considered for different Council actions?
- 4. Are there alternative ways to present and communicate the data and analyses to Council decision-makers more effectively?

Information to be Reviewed

- 1. Groundfish Framework Adjustment 59 - Descriptive and analytical sections relevant to the social and economic impact analyses
- 2. Scallop Framework Adjustment 32 - Descriptive and analytical sections relevant to the social and economic impact analyses

Additional background information

- 1. Relevant SSC memos – to be distributed
- 2. Relevant NMFS and CEQ documents – to be distributed
- 3. Staff presentations – to be distributed